

IN HONOR OF THE RETIREMENT
OF WILLIAM LEFEVRE FROM
THE TRENTON CITY COUNCIL

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 16, 2021

Mrs. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Councilman William LeFevre on the occasion of his retirement from the Trenton City Council after over thirty years of service to the City of Trenton, Michigan. His significant contributions to our downriver community are worthy of commendation.

William LeFevre was born in Columbus, Ohio in 1948, his family moved to Southgate, Michigan that same year. A 1966 graduate of Southgate High School, he attended Central Michigan University from 1966 to 1970. In 1971, he joined his parents in running the family business, B & D Vacuum, where he remains today. In 1973, Trenton became his home.

Councilman LeFevre was appointed to the Trenton City Council in February 1990 to fill a vacant seat, since then he has been reelected every year since. A trusted colleague among his peers, he's served as Mayor Pro Tem six times. He is also the chairman of the Trenton Brownfield Committee. While serving on the Council he has been an advocate for Trenton's financial growth and development and strong voice for the City's public safety officers.

An active member of the community, Councilman LeFevre is a Trenton Rotarian, a Trenton Jaycee, and a longtime member of Trenton Faith United Methodist Church. His sharp wit, caring personality, and compassionate ways—as well as his colorful wardrobe—makes Councilman LeFevre someone that leaves a mark on each person that he meets. All who know him can attest to his generosity and love for his community. A gifted emcee, he has been the host of the annual Trenton City Awards Banquet, Trenton Education Foundation events, the Trenton Rotary Wild Game Lunch, and the Trenton Memorial Day and Christmas Parades for countless years. Councilman LeFevre and his wife Linda reside in Trenton, along with their two children Matthew and Andrea who are proud graduates of Trenton High School.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Councilman William LeFevre for his dedicated service to the citizens of downriver. We are immensely grateful for all that he has done to improve the lives of Trenton, Michigan. I join with Bill's family, friends, and colleagues in extending my best wishes to him in retirement.

HONORING RAYMOND VENNITTI

HON. TIM RYAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 16, 2021

Mr. RYAN. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor and pay tribute to Raymond Vennitti, of Mineral Ridge, who passed away on Saturday, November 20th, 2021, at his residence surrounded by his loving family. He was 76 years old.

Ray was a great friend and supporter. He loved his wife, his daughter, his church, and his community. He was a quiet and strong man who was always behind the scenes to help and support others. He was humble, never looking for credit. He was prayerful, dedicated, and genuinely happy to be with people. He was old school in these ways, and it was always so refreshing to see.

He was born February 15th, 1945, in Youngstown, son of William and Mary Belcastro Vennitti.

Raymond was a 1963 graduate of Niles McKinley High School and a graduate of All-state Barber College in Cleveland. He was a barber at Union Barber Shop in Niles from 1967 to 1972 and then went on to work at Delphi Packard Electric for 32 years, retiring in 2003.

Ray was a member of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in Niles, where he served as a church usher and adult altar server. He was a member of St. Vincent DePaul Society, Mahoning Valley Olde Car Club, and enjoyed gardening, winemaking, and their '55 T-Bird.

Raymond was a sergeant in the U.S. Army, serving one year of active duty in Vietnam.

He will be missed by his wife, Laura Pajank Vennitti, whom he married on November 1st, 1975; a daughter, Clarise of Strongsville; and two sisters, Nancy DeGood of Howland and Angela Vandegrift and her husband, Richard, of Howland.

He was preceded in death by his parents and an infant brother, William Raymond Vennitti. Ray will be missed. And our community and church were much better because of his total commitment to serve others. God Bless Ray. I was honored to call you friend.

RECOGNIZING WILLIAM T. JOHNSON FOR HIS SERVICE AND EFFORTS THAT SAVED THE LIVES OF NUMEROUS AFGHAN PARTNERS

HON. ADAM SMITH

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 16, 2021

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the work of Colonel (Ret.) William T. Johnson, a retired U.S. Army officer and member of the Armed Services Committee's professional staff.

The work of this legislative body is supported by staff who work determinedly on behalf of the American public. These public servants provide valuable policy advice to Members of Congress, assist in crafting legislation and facilitating Congress' oversight responsibilities, among many important duties. While the work of all congressional staff should be recognized, I want to take a moment to single out COL Johnson for going above and beyond his professional responsibilities.

COL Johnson has served for many years on the Armed Services Committee as an expert on Afghanistan policy. This past year, COL Johnson provided invaluable advice to Members of Congress both on and off the Armed Service Committee, staffed critical hearings and briefings, drafted essential, late-breaking updates to the Department's authorities for the scope of its work in Afghanistan. As events unfolded in Afghanistan, offices across Capitol

Hill received countless requests for assistance from Americans, Afghan partners, and members of the international community seeking safe passage out of Afghanistan. Many of those seeking assistance approached the Committee and COL Johnson took great initiative. He not only navigated the formal Defense and State Department process but also leveraged his own informal networks, based on his prior military service and time serving in Afghanistan. COL Johnson made connections that helped vulnerable individuals navigate their way safely to the United States. His tireless efforts and hours of work saved countless lives.

The Armed Services Committee and Member offices received many testimonials in the form of pictures, emails, and text messages confirming that individuals COL Johnson assisted had made it to safety. Without the tireless work of the men and women of the United States Armed Forces, the State Department, and public servants like COL Johnson, such messages of gratitude would not have been possible. This was a tremendous accomplishment. Speaking for myself, other Members of Congress, the American people, Afghans, and other partners, I thank him for his service and efforts.

INTRODUCTION OF A BILL TO DESIGNATE THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA AS AN EMPOWERMENT ZONE

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 16, 2021

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I rise to introduce a bill that would statutorily add the District of Columbia to the national empowerment zone program, which provides federal tax incentives for businesses to locate and invest in low-income areas. In 1993, Congress created the national empowerment zone program and left it to federal agencies to designate a certain number of low-income areas as empowerment zones. The District was not one of the areas selected. However, in 1997, working primarily with Republicans in Congress, I created federal tax incentives for investment in the District by businesses and individuals. The business incentives were similar to, but more generous than, those available under the national empowerment zone program. I got the D.C. incentives reauthorized regularly until 2011, when Congress refused to extend only the D.C. incentives. At the same time, the national empowerment zone program continued to be extended and was last extended through 2025. Under my bill, certain low-income neighborhoods, particularly in Wards 5, 7 and 8, would be treated as empowerment zones as long as the national empowerment zone program remains in effect.

The wisdom of the bipartisan, modest, targeted business tax incentives for D.C. has been amply and visibly demonstrated in the economic resurgence of parts of the nation's capital where they were utilized. Among the most visible examples are the formerly run-down area around Capital One Arena, which is now surrounded by offices, restaurants and